1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
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land. The *Ten'dan'* of Bade also told *Misore* about the festival of the 'bad water-moon.'[1]

The Territorial Ruler: The position of the territorial rulers among the Talense appears to be so similar to that already described when discussing the neighbouring tribe, the Nankanse, as to leave little or nothing to add to what has been recorded. The Talense Chiefs go to Kurugu for their 'red fez.' When a vacancy occurs, there is a scramble among those eligible to fill the vacancy, one vying with another for the post, which, as likely as not, falls to the highest bidder. This method of selection would appear to have very little to recommend it, save that it appears to have been in vogue before our advent in these parts. No doubt it does not 'pay' the Chief, in whose hands the selection lies, to appoint a man who is wholly unacceptable to the people, and the 'presents' tendered on these occasions seem to have been a recognized and not unimportant portion of the revenues accruing to a head Chief. The custom becomes, perhaps, more subject to abuse when we find it practised in turn by the lesser Chiefs in the appointment of the *kambon na*, who, as I have already stated, often seem to usurp the positions which should by right be held by the section-leaders.

In an old 'District Record Book,' at Zuargu, under a date of nearly twenty years ago, I found a note, of which the following is an extract. It refers, I think, more especially to those Chiefs whom I have named 'Government-made-Chiefs': 'The people look with suspicion on any one who prospers and becomes the owner of property, or on any of their so-called 'Chiefs,' who, backed up by us, "put on airs," and try to assume control over the people. The Chiefs have no prestige, no historical names to quote as their predecessors.' This is as true to-day as it was twenty years ago.

The position of the head of a family and of other members of his household among the Talense does not exhibit any features with which we are not already familiar. The following is an additional note on pawns.

Talém (pawns): A man may want to get money to become a Chief and pawn (verb, *nwe talema*) his son. If he is head of a house, he need not ask any one's permission; if not, he will consult his father or elder brother. 'A pawn's head is not shaved as is a slave's.' A boy is pawned for from one to four cows. The debtor is *sandan*, the creditor *bondam*. If the *talem* dies, the *sandan* still has to pay. Famine might cause a man to pawn or sell his son. 'If you sell any one, you give the *Ten'dan'* a goat or a fowl because the land does not agree to that (*tey npu sayera.*)'

[1] See Chapter XXVI.

2: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1945
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In the past hunger or a pressing bride-price debt often left a man with no other resource than to sell his land; and a man in a tight corner, the natives say, does not care about ritual sanctions. Nowadays there are other ways in which a man can struggle through (*walog*) such difficulties.

Where land is concerned Tallensi always connect the fear of mystical punishment by the ancestors with the obligations towards one's dependants and coheirs. The religious sanction and the practical sanction are thought of as aspects of the total economic and kinship configuration. The head of the nuclear lineage is not only bound to but wants to preserve his patrimonial land for his successors, because it is the foundation of the lineage's subsistence. And his brothers and sons do not rely solely on ritual and moral sanctions. They will use every legitimate means to prevent him from selling or pledging land that is due to come to them on his death.

Despite these sanctions the pledging of farm-land is not uncommon; and judging by what happens in such cases, it is probable that much land now regarded as having been bought came into the possession of its present owners by having been pledged, in the first instance, and not redeemed. But the attitude of the natives in such cases is well illustrated by the behaviour of a man I knew very well. He was an extravagant man and had accumulated debts to the tune of about thirty shillings in the past few years. But he was also, like most Tallensi, touchy about his reputation. So when his creditors began to press him, and his failure to pay began to arouse gossip, he borrowed money on the security of his ancestral land. For months afterwards, whenever I met him, he could talk of nothing else but his pledged land. His remorse and apprehension were obvious, for he knew that only a windfall would ever enable him to redeem the land. It was like a Damocles sword over his head. 'If I do not repay the loan my forefathers won't allow it. They will kill deaths in my family', he told me anxiously.

Borrowing land for a season or a period of years is very common. I have never heard of a case in which the lender has been cheated of his right of resumption. Here, again, the sanction of the ancestor cult is the significant factor. When land is borrowed for a long time, the decisive act in the transaction is a sacrifice to the lineage ancestors of the lender's lineage. This is performed in the presence of the other members of the lineage who have an interest in the land, and of the borrower, who must provide the animals and libations for the rite. Though the loan is made at the discretion of the head of the lineage owning the land, his co-members must consent and the lineage ancestors must be informed. The ancestors who 'own' the land are exhorted to prosper the borrower. Without this covenant, expressing the consent of all concerned, the transaction is void. The borrower would not venture to farm the land, even if this were possible. He believes that the owners' outraged ancestors will bring disaster on him, if he did so.

It is important to note that, with rare exceptions, such land transactions always take place between kinsmen or clansmen. All forms of land ownership and utilization exist only within the genealogical frame of the

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social structure. The economic utilization of land is regulated by the process of segmentation in the lineage and by the system of co-operation in the household. It turns upon the acceptance, by the members of the household, of the norms governing their relationships and the enforcement of these norms, in accordance with the principle of reciprocity, by direct action. Behind these norms stands the ancestor cult, the supreme sanction of solidarity in the pursuit of common interests by the lineage. Granted favourable external conditions, the efficiency of production, among the Tallensi, with the technical means at their disposal, depends on the organization of the household and lineage.

Broadly speaking, then, every unit of farm-land corresponds to a unit of social structure. More specifically, the elementary utilitarian unit of territory corresponds to the elementary unit of the social structure, and the relationship between them, summed up in the concept of ownership, is a permanent one. The history of a nuclear lineage is *eo ipso* the history of its farm-land. Every change in the structure of the lineage implies a corresponding change in the distribution of the usufructuary rights in its farm-land. While the lineage exists it never forfeits ownership of its farm-land, whether its members cultivate it or not. The strength of the tie felt to hold between a lineage and its ancestral farm-land (*banam kuo*) is shown in the rule that purchased land is redeemable at any time by repayment of the purchase price (or more probably, as we have suggested, of the original loan) by the vendor lineage.[1]

The keystone of the institutional framework of Tale agriculture is security of land tenure. But what, we may ask, guarantees to the lineage security of ownership of its farm-land, in the absence of judicial institutions and instruments? The answer is contained in the Tale concept of the *tey* as a community. The landowning unit is a segment of a maximal lineage and its property rights are an aspect of its corporate relationship to the maximal lineage and clan. Within a settlement the stretch of land parcelled out into farm plots corresponds to the clan occupying that locality as it segmented into a hierarchy of lineage units. All segments of the clan of the same order are equal to one another. They have an equal weight in the structure of the clan, equal power in its affairs. They have, in consequence, equal property rights (though not necessarily equal amounts of property), equal opportunity for holding and farming land (though not necessarily equal achievement), and equal social duties to one another. Hence each segment respects the land rights of all other segments, just as it respects their rights in relation to their wives and children. This is an aspect of the solidarity of the clan, one of the indices of the common interest of all members of the clan in one another's welfare. It is a feature of the equilibrium of interlineage and intra-clan relationships. The relative structural autonomy of the nuclear lineage, which is a basic factor in the equilibrium of the maximal lineage and clan, presupposes corresponding economic autonomy. Just as members of the same

[1] In practice, the rule does not hold beyond three generations, by which time all witnesses to the transaction, and their sons (whom they would have told of it) are dead, but attempts are often made to assert the right of redemption after three generations.

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adapted by stages to changes in its internal composition due to the passage of time or the cumulative effects of social and economic pressure, without bursting its form.

Solidarity within the clan or the lineage is governed by the field principle. It is a function of the situation; and it is a function, also, of the segmentary relationship of each unit involved to other like units, to more inclusive units, and to the whole social structure. The complex of thought, feeling, action, and expression we designate as the sentiment of solidarity is evoked in different degrees in accordance with the sector of the social structure engaged. It reflects the range of common interests evoked in the situation and the strength of the common values.

Within the clan, or any segment of it, the sentiment of solidarity is a constant motive of conduct and a regular criterion by which the individual evaluates the behaviour of others. We have seen how it grows out of the lifelong association of lineage kin in daily life. Hence a Talǝŋ identifies himself by reference to his clan settlement and the segment of his clan to which he belongs. He speaks of his clansmen as 'our folk (*ti yidɛm*)' and of their wives and children as 'our wives (*ti pɔɣaba*)' and 'our children (*ti biis*)'. In the old days of warfare, as in market brawls or hunting expeditions to-day, a Talǝŋ never stops to question the rights or wrongs of an argument in which a clansman of his is involved with a non-clansman, or a close agnate with a distant agnate. He immediately takes his clansman's or close agnate's part.

The unity of a clan or a lineage is not only a vital fact of experience for its members but the principal concept by which other corporate groups define it in jural, political, and ritual relations. Thus in the old days a creditor could raid the live-stock of any clansman of his debtor, but not those of a neighbour of his debtor who belonged to a different clan. In the latter case a reprisal raid was the penalty. In the former case the victim of the raid could demand restitution from his clansman, the original debtor; and I know of men who pawned a child or sold him into slavery in order to find the means of repaying a clansman who had been raided, rather than let the affair become a source of conflict in the clan. This is a good illustration, incidentally, of the statement previously made that collective responsibility is not a principle of Tale jural relations. It is not the clan but the debtor himself who is responsible for his debt. Self-help is a technique for putting pressure on a debtor through the mechanisms of clan and lineage cohesion.

The same principle appears in the abduction of wives of distant unrelated clans. Thus Pal of Zubiuŋ abducted the wife of a Yinduuri man. He claimed that this was merely 'cancelling a debt (*lɛrǝg samǝr*)'. Some years earlier a distant clansman of the Yinduuri man had abducted the wife of one of Pal's clansmen and this 'debt' had now been cancelled. The point is, not that all Yinduuri was held responsible for the original wrong, but that every wife is a gain to the clan as a whole and the loss of a wife is a loss to the clan as a whole. If a clan wishes to avoid reprisals such as those taken by Pal, men of the clan must not countenance the abduction of wives by any of their fellows. It is like the avenging of a clansman's death at the hands of men of another clan in the old days.

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never undertakes anything of importance without consulting Yikpɛmdaan; Yikpɛmdaan need never be in want of a sheep or goat to sacrifice if there are sheep and goats in Tinta'alɔm's house. If any member of the lineage segment of which Tinta'alɔm is the head gets into difficulty, he goes at once to Yikpɛmdaan for counsel and help. 602

A more telling case is that of Lɔyani and Gai. They belong to different segments of Zubiuŋ-Yakɔra.[1] Many years ago Gai quarrelled with the elders of the maximal lineage over the succession to the lineage *bɔyar*. The Yakɔra Tɛndaana of the time took an oath binding all the people of Yakɔra to have nothing to do with Gai in jural and ritual matters until he apologized and a ritual reconciliation was made. Gai and his family keep aloof from all corporate activities of Zubiuŋ-Yakɔra. He has obstinately rejected several indirect advances made to him suggesting a reconciliation. One day there was a funeral at Gai's house, and I called to see how a man who is virtually ostracized by his clan would manage an affair that is usually a corporate activity of the whole clan. Finding no other Yakɔra people at the funeral, I went round to Lɔyani's house afterwards. We discussed Gai and his affairs; and Lɔyani, with that blunt candour that has won him general esteem, told me the whole story. Gai's conduct, Lɔyani concluded, was specially distressing to him. 'For', said he, with a trace of bitterness, 'Gai is my *soog*. I should be the one to go to his help immediately and to support him in all his troubles. But if I did, would not the people of Zubiuŋ say that I was breaking faith? Would I not be rejecting the oath of the late (Yakɔra) Tɛndaana? And so I can do nothing.' 602 626 578

In this case Lɔyani's position of influence and responsibility in the maximal lineage compels him to put the interests of lineage unity before those of his *soog*, and Gai's obduracy makes it more difficult for him to compromise. The case of Ɔndieso and Nɛna'ab, who are also *saarɔt* belonging to different segments of the same maximal lineage, is more usual. They 'borrow (*peŋ*)' things from each other on the same principle as do members of an expanded family. Normally, if a man borrows something from a member of a lineage segment other than his own, it is a debt that must be repaid in due course. Eight or nine years ago, Ɔndieso borrowed a goat from Nɛna'ab's son. No request was ever made for repayment; but about three years later, Nɛna'ab borrowed three shillings from Ɔndieso; and this was tacitly understood, by both, to have cancelled the debt of the goat. In 1936 an ancient quarrel between Ɔndieso's segment and Nɛna'ab's segment that had been dormant for years flared up again owing to a dispute over the inheritance of a widow. For some months the two segments were completely estranged, the more so as the head of Nɛna'ab's segment had taken the dispute to the chief and so brought the slur of publicity on the head of Ɔndieso's segment. Just then there was a death in Nɛna'ab's family; 602 578 [426]

[1] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, ch. vi, passim.

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are entirely their own property. A woman owns the sleeping-mats she makes. A potteress is in the same position as a blacksmith or leather-worker. She keeps the money or natural products for which she exchanges her pots. Nowadays many women who live near a market carry on a regular or intermittent petty trade in cooked food. Sometimes, borrowing the small capital (two or three shillings is sufficient) with which to start, they keep the profits of their trade. It is not uncommon for women to own livestock, mainly poultry but often sheep and goats, and occasionally a cow. They may be obtained by gift or purchase, in the case of small stock, or by exchanging the natural increase of small stock for more valuable stock. A woman's sheep, goat, or cow will be herded with the family livestock, but her 'ownership' (*soləm*, from *so*, to own) remains secure.

A woman's clothing, and her household utensils, most of which she provides for herself, belong to her solely. They are distributed, on her death, to her daughters, daughters-in-law, and sisters. Any money or livestock she may possess passes to her sons on her death, these being what might be called consumers' capital goods, the appropriate owners of which are men. They remain, therefore, in her *dug*, and do not accrete to the patrimonial property of her husband's effective minimal lineage. But it is an accepted principle that her husband has an over-right to them in her lifetime. For, as the natives put it, 'How can a man own his wife and not own the products of her labour?'

There is a quibble in this statement, the concept 'own' being used first in the sense of 'to have authority over', and secondly to mean 'having full rights of disposal over'—rights *in personam* being equated with rights *in rem*, to speak in lawyer's language.[1] And the Tallensi are not blind to this. Theoretically a man is entitled to utilize his wife's property as he wishes. In practice, he would not dare to do so without her consent, and the transaction is looked upon as a loan (*samər*). True, like all loans within the domestic family, it is not subject to book-keeping. But just as the woman feels morally bound to put her possessions at her husband's disposal if he is in difficulties, so her husband feels in honour bound to repay her in time, and generously, if he has any self-respect. Similarly, if a woman contracts a debt without her husband's knowledge and explicit permission he cannot be held liable. But no 'man of sense' would publicly repudiate his wife's debt. He reserves his reproaches for the privacy of the home. Significantly, a man does not, as a rule, settle his wife's debt. He will try to temporize with the creditor—an art in which the Tallensi are past masters—until his wife succeeds in finding the wherewithal to satisfy him. Or, if the husband cannot avoid paying the debt, he considers this as an advance

[1] Cf. Radcliffe-Brown, A. R., 'Patrilineal and Matrilineal Succession', *Iowa Law Review*, xx. 2, Jan. 1935, for an illuminating discussion of the anthropological relevance of these legal concepts.

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593 which, it is tacitly understood, his wife will one day make good. Often such debts between spouses are straightened out by mutual borrowings,
426 tacitly understood to cancel one another. Very often, however, a man has to cajole his wife with definite promises to repay before she will lend him her property. But the natives are emphatic about one point: that all such transactions belong to the give and take of marital co-operation and solidarity. It is one of the ways in which a woman stands by her husband and a man by his wife.

The Husband's Authority over his Wife

593 As might well be expected, these rights and duties of spouse to spouse
578 do not rest on anything in the nature of a formal compact. There is no jural machinery or sanction by means of which a husband or wife can be compelled to perform his or her duties to his or her partner. A man can, and sometimes does, chastise his wife for incorrigible laziness, disobedience, or a misdemeanour detrimental to the unity of the family. He does it usually in a fit of anger or exasperation, as one would strike a child, and not as a deliberate punishment. For though Tallensi think that such disciplinary measures are right and necessary sometimes (women being kittle cattle, who will not always listen to reason), they consider them to be a regrettable and undignified necessity not entirely in keeping with the relationship of marriage, and at bottom repugnant to a self-respecting man. That is why when a quarrel between husband and wife ends in blows, neighbours hearing the commotion rush in to separate the pair and calm the enraged husband. 'I often scold my wives', said a Tale friend to me, after a heated argument with one of them, 'but I have never, as I sit here, lifted a hand to them. How could I thrash my wife, seeing that she gave up her father and her mother to come and marry me?' To beat a wife, in short, shows a poor appreciation of her.

Women admit the right of a man to strike his wife, and they see it as a feature of the authority over her conferred on him by marriage. But in fact, cases of wife-beating are far from common. Judging by the cases I have heard of, they are least likely to occur at the two extremes of the marriage cycle. A young man fears that he may lose his wife if he beats her; an older man, as the statement quoted above shows, with a wife of long standing, feels that it is incompatible with their mutual trust and comradeship.

593 A woman will not, as a rule, bear a grudge for blows struck under
627 provocation. But if she is excessively, or, in her opinion, unjustifiably thrashed, she will run away from her husband. She may go off with another man; or she may return to her father or brother, who, if he is a self-respecting man, will take her part and refuse to give her up until her husband apologizes and promises better behaviour in future. In any case, it is a troublesome affair for the husband. It is worth noting, also, that in her conjugal family only a woman's husband has the right

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payment of at least a part of the fixed bride-price of three cows and a bull, or their equivalent. The essential responsibility for the performance of these two acts lies with the bridegroom's father or father's heir, subject to the formal consent of the elders of his inner lineage. Formally, the bride's paternal kin send their invitation to the bridegroom's paternal kin to *lu sɔndaan* through the head of the latter's nuclear or inner lineage, and make their demands for bride-price through the same channels; for no jural act takes place except in the framework of the lineage system. But actually the responsibility for satisfying the bride's kin falls on the bridegroom's father. He must 'find the things'—the fowls and guinea-fowls—for the placation gifts; he must send off the intermediary (*pɔyasama*) who carries them to the bride's family; he must furnish the animals or goods or money to pay the bride-price. 'Is it not his child? (*Pa u biiga*)' say the natives, implying that this is a duty arising out of the fact of parenthood. In part it is a specific duty; in part it is an aspect of a general responsibility that a man bears for his son's jural relations. Thus if his son's wife is abducted it is the father who calls on the other members of his inner lineage to stand by him in taking action to recover the wife. If his son has abducted another man's wife the father is directly answerable. Strictly speaking a son cannot contract a debt involving heritable property such as cattle or large sums of money without his father's authorization. Even if the son is a man of substance, a wise creditor will insist that his father's (and also his brothers' of the same nuclear lineage) consent to the transaction be obtained first and made known to him. If this is not done the creditor's chances of recovery are small. It becomes a question of one man's word against another's and Tallensi are past masters in the art of putting off a creditor. The concurrence of the debtor's father and brothers fixes liability for ever, and if the debtor dies before settling the debt his father, or his heir, is liable. These rules do not apply to small sums of money, say a shilling or two, or things of small value such as a hen or a loin-cloth. But petty borrowing and lending rarely takes place between people who are not friends or close kin, and it is thus generally fitted into the scheme of reciprocal aid that obtains between friends and kinsfolk.

In their jural aspect these obligations of a father arise from the fact of 'begetting (*dɔyam*)'; in their economic aspect they are greatly influenced by the principle of reciprocity. Where obligations of such great social consequence are involved, the principle of reciprocity is not limited to particular individuals but it binds their heirs and successors as well owing to the operation of the lineage principle. One or two cases will show how these two aspects are interwoven.

While Tampoyar was courting his wife he had very little recourse to his proxy father's help. The few shillings he had received from selling ground-nuts and a fowl or two sufficed to provide the occasional penny

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593 577 its working, as we have seen. Moreover, it applies equally to all members of a household and is implicit in all kinship and affinal relations. It arises out of common interests, mutual rights, and mutual obligations and is a way of giving expression to them. As these interests, rights, and obligations are of different kinds and degrees, corresponding to the differences in quality and degree of the relations involved, so there are different kinds and degrees of reciprocity. But all forms of equivalent returns have the general purpose of keeping social relations on a stable and mutual footing. The greater the field of common interests between persons, the less does deliberate calculation enter into the working of this principle. Hence the closer and more personal the relationship between people, the less formal is the rendering of equivalent returns for services or loans. Mutual services, between lineage segments, as, for instance, in the performance of one another's funeral ceremonies, are highly stereotyped. A son-in-law's services to his father-in-law must be immediately recompensed with food and drink. But between father and son, brother and brother, or husband and wife there is a continual give-and-take on a basis of all-in reciprocity. Equivalent returns cannot be demanded; it depends upon the good sense of the person concerned as to when and how he makes them, even in situations where custom lays down a definite norm. Meanness or selfishness in this respect gives rise to ill feeling and so to disharmony.

593 577 426 Tallensi sum up the observance of the principle of equivalent returns under the idea of debt (*samər*). Debts are goods or services accepted or requested on the definite understanding that they will be repaid and it is a maxim that debts never die (*sama pu kpira*). A man's heirs are liable for his debts.[1] Where equivalent returns are the customary mode of recompense, accepting goods and services is not a debt. A man 'borrows' (*peŋ*) money or a cow from a distant clansman and that is a debt; he 'takes' (*zaŋ*) or 'accepts' (*die*) his son's or wife's belongings if he needs them, and it is not a debt (*la ka samər*).

The most important criterion determining whether or not a particular service or gift or loan creates a debt is kinship. Members of a nuclear lineage and of an expanded family do not incur debts by borrowing from one another. The same rule applies to cognates whose kinship ties are as close as those of members of a nuclear lineage. If a man obtains something from his own mother's brother, for example, it is not a debt. This is definite. In theory there can be no debts either between members of the same inner lineage, or cognates whose kinship ties are as close as those of members of one inner lineage. What happens in practice

[1] Unless, as has been mentioned, they were not made a party to the debts at the time they were incurred or were not told of them by the debtor himself. The question of the procedures and sanctions that can be used to secure payment of a debt do not concern us here. One of the chief sanctions is public opinion. A defaulter finds it very difficult to borrow again.

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varies from case to case and from lineage to lineage. We have seen how this works out among the members of Ziŋgan biis. Another instance is that of Yinworəb and his 'son' (his grandfather's brother's great-grandson) Kadɛne. Yinworəb gave Kadɛne three shillings to pay the hearing fee when he was summoned to the chief's tribunal. This was not a debt. Three or four months later Yinworəb borrowed a goat from Kadɛne. Again, this was not a debt but it was tacitly understood to be an equivalent return for the loan of the three shillings. By contrast, Lɔyani used some sheep belonging to Maantiya, his father's half-brother's grandson and therefore his 'son'. This he regarded as a debt because the sheep were earmarked for the payment of Maantiya's wife's bride-price.

Outside the inner lineage, however, a debt is incurred by accepting goods or services from a clansman. The only exceptions are if the lender is also a matrilateral kinsman of the borrower—e.g. a uterine kinsman—or a close friend.

The principle of reciprocity, as seen in operation in the family and lineage, ties on to a more general theory of social action in Tale society. It is a particular application of the principle of equilibrium in the social system. The idea that in the long run mutual services or favours should balance is inherent in Tale social organization. Canalized by the lineage system, it means that a son or grandson or later descendant can make or expect equivalent returns for an action of his father or grandfather or earlier ancestor. It is a matter of pride as well as of moral or jural obligation to see that one benefit is balanced by another. For example, it is a common thing at an elder's funeral to see a distant clansman of his, who is not obliged to do so, bring a sheep or goat as a valedictory offering to the dead. The donor explains that there is a special reason for this offering. The deceased had been a friend of his father. When his father died the deceased brought a goat as a valedictory offering to his father. His goat is a return gift. The maxim that 'debts do not die' springs from this principle; and it applies not only to the relations of the living among themselves but to their relations with their departed ancestors. A grandson may have to atone for his grandfather's sins, as happened with Kuwaas. Years of constant ill luck were attributed by a succession of diviners to the sins of his paternal grandfather, whose name he bore. Kuwaas I, as Chief of Tongo, had betrayed his office by abandoning his clan and seeking only his personal safety once when the Hill Talis attacked Tongo. This was a grave sin against the ancestors, who demanded a large expiatory sacrifice, and until this was paid the sin would continue to lie heavily on the descendants of Kuwaas I. The right of self-help by raiding, and the notion that retaliatory warfare and retaliatory abduction of women are simply 'cancelling a debt (*lɛrəg samər*)',[1] belong to the same category of ideas. The principle of reciprocity underlies all these categories of social behaviour.

[1] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, pp. 236, 245.

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604 431 birth his mother might have been an owner of these things. In the past, when people moved about less freely than now, a man passing through the clan settlement of his *ahəb* could seize any guinea-fowl he saw and collect any guinea-fowl eggs he came across[1] irrespective of which member of his mother's brother's clan they belonged to. Nowadays this custom is objected to. Tallensi say that with people moving about so freely and frequently as they do now, it would soon lead to the destruction of all their flocks of guinea-fowl. But an *ahəŋ* is still at liberty to cut himself a few heads of guinea corn or millet from any farm when walking through the settlement of his *ahəb*, if he is feeling hungry.

Women *ahəs* have an analogous privilege of much more practical value. As we have learnt, if a woman has a small baby she often gets a young sister of her own inner lineage or clan to come and live with her and be the infant's nursemaid. If there is no suitable girl in her father's lineage, she is entitled to ask her *ahəb* or her father's *ahəb* to give her a little girl. This is a very common practice.

604 426 Sister's son and mother's brother cannot contract debts towards each other. If a man borrows money or livestock from an *ahəb* or *ahəŋ* repayment cannot be demanded. It rests with the borrower to make an equivalent return in due course. Ɔndieso provided an amusing illustration of this rule. He borrowed three shillings from Naambulɔg, a member of the lineage of his paternal grandfather's *ahəb*, and a friend of his. For about a year nothing was said about this loan and the friendship of the two men continued as before. Then a disagreement developed between Kutɔbis, head of Ɔndieso's inner lineage, and the head of Naambulɔg's clan, for which the latter was in part responsible. As it was a question of a right vested in the inner lineage, Ɔndieso supported and indeed instigated Kutɔbis. He was particularly angry with Naambulɔg. Thereupon the latter immediately demanded repayment of the loan, thus symbolically relegating Ɔndieso to the class of non-relatives, and Ɔndieso ostentatiously repaid two shillings. Repaying Naambulɔg in kind, he had deducted one shilling for two fowls Naambulɔg had borrowed from his brother two or three years previously.

604 431 When Bontuya died his son Ba'andoog had to sacrifice a white bull to the dead man's *Yin* shrine before starting the funeral ceremonies. Ba'andoog went to his father's sister's son, who, he knew, had a white bull, and asked for the animal. Very reluctantly the *ahəŋ* parted with his bull. As he explained to me afterwards, it was a very fine young bull. 'But', he said, 'Bontuya begot me and I have no power to refuse him anything.' Several months later the father-in-law of the *ahəŋ* came to him demanding a cow of his daughter's bride-price. The young man promptly went

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[1] Guinea-fowl are only semi-domestic birds. They live out of doors and are very difficult to catch alive. They also lay their eggs out of doors. The privilege of an *ahəŋ* therefore had more of a token value than any practical worth. But I know several men who claim to have used their privilege at least once.

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to his mother's brother's house and Ba'andoog gave him a cow of somewhat greater value than the white bull to give to his father-in-law. But such exchanges are exceptional. A fowl, a sixpence, a slab of tobacco, a few kola nuts, these are the more usual kinds of gifts that pass between extra-clan kin.

There are two gifts from a mother's brother to which great significance is attached. One of these is the gift of a hen to a lad from his *ahəb* when he becomes capable of productive labour. This is almost a universal custom among the Tallensi. As we have shown in an earlier chapter, its importance lies in that it marks the beginning of the economic (and, therefore, in due course, social) self-differentiation of a boy within the joint family. It symbolizes, and in many cases actually serves as, the starting-point of the accumulation of wealth by individual effort. It was the proud boast of Barimoda that starting as a small boy with a fowl given to him by his father's *ahəb* he had eventually 'achieved' (*paa*) a cow from which he had had several calves. In every settlement one can find two or three men who have matched this achievement, but it is more common to find men who have 'achieved' a goat or a sheep in this way. And though Tallensi always speak as if they began with one hen this is not strictly true. A boy may receive fowls from two or three matrilateral kinsmen, and he may be given more than one fowl by an *ahəb* who is specially attached to him. Koyatee was unlucky with the first hen his true mother's brother gave him. When it died he told his *ahəb*, who gave him another. He successfully bred a brood of chickens from this hen and was given yet another hen by the same mother's brother.

An *ahəb* has no claims on livestock bred in this way by his sister's son. Very often, if a man needs a fowl for a sacrifice and has none that is suitable, he will send to ask his sister's son for one; but this is not connected with the gift of a hen he may have made to the latter many years before. The equivalent return for the mother's brother's hen is made in another way. As has been previously mentioned, when a man 'achieves' a cow, after starting with his mother's brother's hen, he owes this cow to his mother's brother's lineage ancestor shrine (*bəyar*). He keeps the cow until it is too old to calve and then takes it to his mother's brother's lineage as a thank-offering to his maternal ancestors. For, say the natives, it must surely have been their beneficence that gave him prosperity, since the hen came from their son.

Far more important is the gift of land by an *ahəb* to an *ahəŋ*. There are degrees of finality about such a gift. It is a very common practice for both men and women to beg a plot of land from an *ahəb*—or any other extra-clan matrilateral kinsman—living in an adjacent settlement to plant with ground-nuts or sweet potatoes. The land given for these purposes generally lies on the outskirts of the donor's settlement, near that of the recipient. As often as not, it is land too exhausted for grain crops; or else it is land not required by the *ahəb* that season. Use of the land

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is granted for one season only, but the *ahəŋ* is often allowed to retain it for several years with the tacit understanding that it must be surrendered whenever the donor asks for it, as he will do a season in advance when he wishes to resume cultivation of it. The gift is made without any special ceremony and the recipient pays no rent. If he gets a good crop he usually gives his *ahəb* a basket of ground-nuts or sweet potatoes as a token of gratitude. But this is entirely optional. A person may borrow a ground-nut plot in the same way from a uterine or other matrilateral or sororal kinsman in his or her own clan and the same rules apply. Women also borrow plots for ground-nuts from their own kinsmen belonging to their husbands' clans. This practice is so common that it can be described as the normal thing for young men, especially if they are unmarried and farming with their fathers. Nor is it shortage of land that makes young men ask an *ahəb* for a ground-nut plot rather than their fathers. Nayabaal, Nalɛbseug, and Mosuor, all youths aged between 15 and 20, had borrowed ground-nut and sweet potato plots from their mothers' brothers' people, but the fathers of all three had ample land. Indeed Nayabaal's father allowed two of his *ahəs* to grow ground-nuts on a distant piece of fallow land belonging to him. A strong motive is the knowledge that a youth's father will, as a rule, not interfere with the manner in which the youth may wish to dispose of a crop grown on his mother's brother's land as he might if it were grown on land belonging to the nuclear lineage. There is always the feeling that anything obtained through the use of lineage resources must be at the disposal of the whole domestic group if it is required. Thus borrowing a ground-nut plot from one's mother's brother reflects the association we have previously stressed of individual self-differentiation in economic and social terms with maternal origin. But there is also a more important jural reason. A man cannot refuse his son or brother's son if the latter asks for some land to use for himself and the father has spare land. But then he cannot take possession of the land again without very good reason. The result is that if a man obtains a plot of land from his father or the head of his nuclear lineage for growing ground-nuts he tends, in due course, to establish *de facto* possessory rights over it and it never reverts to the patrimonial land. Unless, therefore, a man wishes deliberately to endow a son or brother's son with land, to be held in perpetuity by the latter's agnatic descendants, he prefers not to grant such a dependant a plot for his private use. He cannot make such a grant to one son or brother's son only; he would have to give similar plots to his other sons and prozy sons. Resort to matrilateral kin avoids this dilemma.

This arises also in the more serious business of borrowing land to cultivate as a regular bush-farm for a period of years. A man who wants a new bush-farm commonly tries to get one from a matrilateral or sororal kinsman or lineage. It is very rare for land to be borrowed from a clansman who is not also a matrilateral or sororal kinsman, for permanent

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cultivation. It is felt to be incompatible with clanship ties. Clansmen form a corporate unit, in theory made up of a vastly expanded group of brothers. In theory, every member of a clan or maximal lineage has an interest in and a potential right to inherit the property of any other member of the clan. Hence if a lineage segment dies out all the land formerly owned by its members passes into the ownership of the next higher lineage of which it forms a segment, and is vested in the head of that lineage. Thus if a man were to lend land for permanent farming to a clansman he would never be able to demand its return. The lender, moreover, would not give the land with that feeling of personal interest in the recipient's welfare and desire for his prosperity that an *ahɔb* has towards his sister's son or an *ahɔŋ* towards his mother's brother. A matrilateral kinsman gives freely, solely out of consideration for the needs of his kinsman, not because the latter has a right to what he asks for; and the spirit in which the gift is made carries with it the blessings of the giver's ancestors. There is an advantage to the giver in that what is voluntarily given can be taken back without affecting the relationship of the parties, and an advantage to the recipient in that restoring the borrowed land to its owner does not mean a surrender of a right.

I have recorded the ownership of a large number of bush-farms. They fall into three approximately equal groups: those which are said to have belonged to the lineage from time immemorial; those which it is claimed were bought by an ancestor; and those which, it is said, were obtained by an ancestor by gift from a mother's brother or other matrilateral kinsman. The latter explanation is so common and so stereotyped that it may well be mythical in many cases. But cross-checking and the fact that such gifts are still commonly made show that the claim is true for most cases. I witnessed the whole procedure twice, when two men well known to me obtained gifts of bush-farms from matrilateral kinsmen. Ɔmara, a Zoo man, obtained his from the head of the inner lineage at Zubiuŋ to which his paternal great-grandfather's *ahɔb* had belonged; and Sombura from Ba'ari obtained his from his paternal grandfather's mother's brother's lineage at Tongo. These cases are the more significant in that it has been the practice, for several generations, for Tongo people to get land from their matrilateral kinsmen at Zoo, and for Ba'ari people to resort to their kinsmen at Yayazoor for grants of bush-farms.

The procedure is as follows. A man looking for a new bush-farm sees a suitable piece of land which he knows belongs to his true or to a classificatory mother's brother's lineage (*ahɔb yidɛm*). He ascertains that it has not been cultivated for the last ten or fifteen years, which suggests that the owners are not hard pressed for land. He then goes to 'beg' (*soh*) the land from his *ahɔb yidɛm*. The land Ɔmara desired belonged to his lineage *ahɔb*[1] Dawoog's inner lineage; and partly for this reason,

[1] i.e. the progenitrix of Ɔmara's medial lineage had been a daughter of Dawoog's inner lineage.